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(54) Gaming table; cards

(57) A gaming table has its playing surface marked with a plurality of player's positions each of which comprises two betting stations, one to bet directly against the dealer and the other to bet against not beating a specified hand.

The deck of cards that are used in the game may also comprise a permanent "wild card" which is assigned one to each player for use in improving the hand. The card is made of a more robust constitution than the normal cards and is typically formed of plastics material.

Methods of playing a "brag"-type game are disclosed.

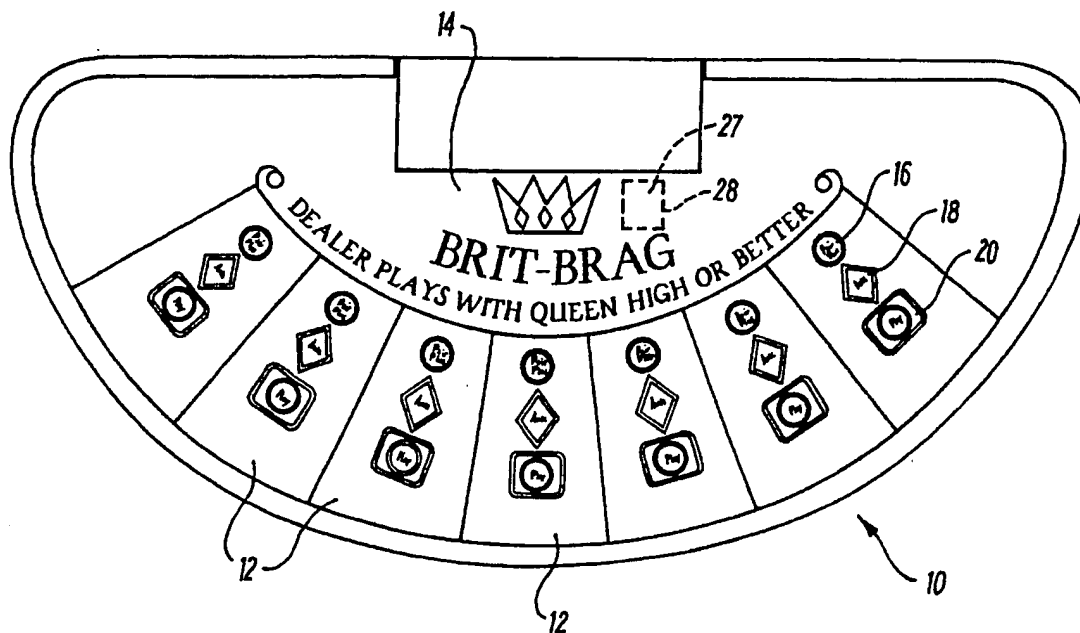


FIG. 1

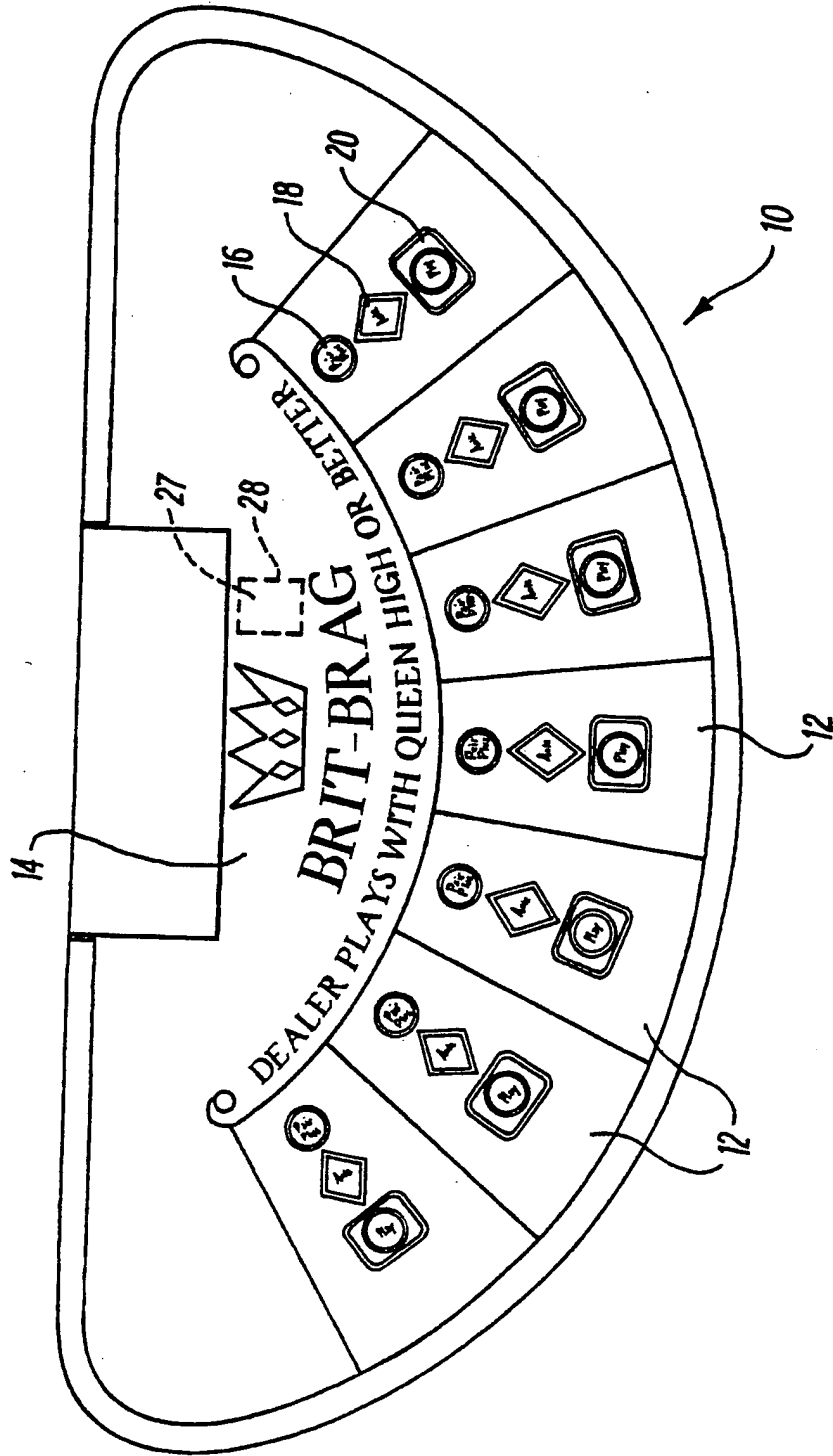
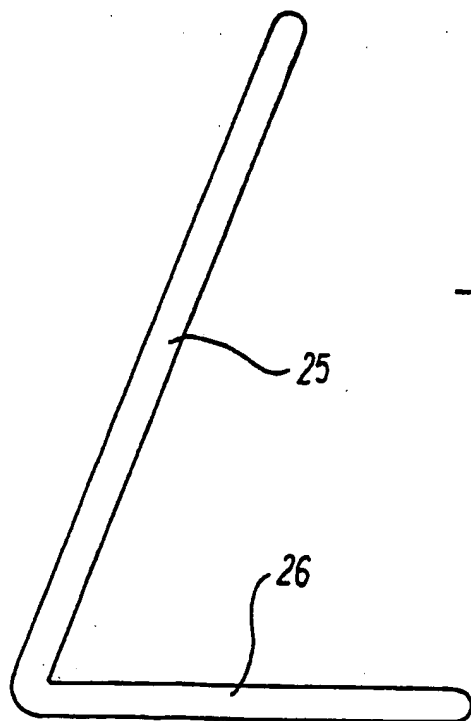


FIG. 1



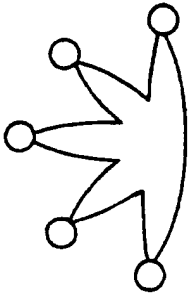
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FIG. 2

BRIT — BRAG		
ANTE BONUS		PAIR PLUS PAYS
	PAIR	1—1
	FLUSH	4—1
1—1	RUN	6—1
4—1	TRIPS	30—1
5—1	BRAG	40—1

FIG. 3

25



NAME OF GAME

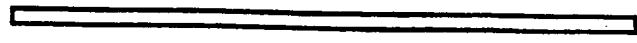
PROPRIETARY DETAILS

Fig. 4

CASINO
NAME
&
LOGO

PROMOTIONAL
INFORMATION

Fig. 5



3/3

Fig. 6

Games and Game Apparatus

The invention relates to a card game for one or more players playing against a dealer/banker and to apparatus for use in playing card games. The game and apparatus are suitable for use particularly, but not exclusively, in a casino or similar establishment.

Casinos and leisure establishments continually require new games to offer their clientele. Such games are generally required to enable each player to play against a banker (who usually also acts as dealer) provided by the casino, rather than against other players. Alternatively, in a "card room" game (where legislation does not permit a house banker) each player may have the option to act as banker, whilst the establishment runs the game on behalf of the banker and takes fees from the players. Difficulties have been encountered in providing games suitable for this purpose. The present invention seeks to provide a novel game which overcomes these difficulties and apparatus for use in playing this or other games.

According to one aspect of the invention there is provided a method of playing a card game involving one or more persons acting as a dealer and a banker, and at least one player, the method comprising the steps of:-

- (a) the or each player placing a bet
 - (i) that the player's hand will be greater than a first predetermined rank, where all possible hands are ranked according to predetermined rules; or
 - (ii) that the player's hand will beat the dealer; or
 - (iii) a combination of the above;
- (b) the dealer dealing to each player (including himself) a hand of cards;
- (c) the or each player who placed a bet according to (ii) above inspecting his or her hand and deciding either to forfeit the original bet to the banker or to place a further bet;
- (d) the dealer revealing his hand and determining whether it exceeds a second predetermined rank; and
 - if the dealer's hand does not exceed the second predetermined rank, the banker paying each player an amount based on the bet according to (ii) above and returning the further bet to the player, or
 - if the dealer's hand exceeds the second predetermined rank, comparing the dealer's hand in turn with that of each other player who placed a bet according to (ii) above and if the player's hand is higher, the banker paying the player an

amount based on both initial and further bets, and if the player's hand is lower, the player forfeiting both bets to the banker;

- (e) the banker paying in accordance with a predetermined scale any player who placed a bet according to (i) above and whose hand exceeds the first predetermined rank.

According to another aspect of the invention there is provided a method of playing a card game involving a dealer and at least one player comprising the steps of:-

- establishing a hierarchy of a plurality of possible hands;

- establishing a predetermined plurality of winning card combinations;

- providing at least one player with a plurality of betting options, wherein said betting options at least comprise:

- (a) whether said player's hand attains at least one of said predetermined plurality of winning combinations; and
 - (b) whether said player's hand has a higher ranking than a hand of said dealer;

- displaying a plurality of indicia of playing cards to form at least one player's hand and a dealer's hand;

and

resolving bets of said at least one player.

The dealer may also act as banker. The player's cards may be dealt unseen or seen. The cards preferably form a standard 52-card deck. Preferably the hand comprises three cards.

In the case of the preferred three card version of the game, hands are preferably ranked as follows, where A = ace, K = king, Q = queen, J = jack and numbers 10 to 2 designate the other cards:

Highest: BRAG: Three of one suit in sequence

AKQ highest ranking brag

KQJ next highest ranking brag

QJ10 next highest ranking brag, and so
on, until

32A lowest ranking brag

TRIPS: Three of One Rank

AAA highest ranking trips

KKK next highest ranking trips, and so
on, until

222 lowest ranking trips

RUN: Three of mixed suits in sequence

AKQ highest ranking

KQJ next highest ranking, and so on,
until

32A lowest ranking

FLUSH: Three of One Suit

AKJ highest ranking

AK10 next highest, and so on, until

532 lowest ranking

PAIR: Two of Same Rank

AAK highest ranking

AAQ next highest ranking, and so on,
until

223 lowest ranking

Lowest: HIGH CARD (a hand comprising none of the above)

AKJ highest ranking

AK10 next highest ranking, and so on, until

532 lowest ranking

Ace is high, but can be low in 3-2-A Sequence.

For hands other than three cards, rankings would
be suitably changed as would predetermined ranks and pay
outs.

Preferably an additional pay out is made by the banker to any player who has made an initial bet according to (ii) above and a further bet, and whose hand is any of a number of specified high ranking hands. The pay out may be made in accordance with a predetermined scale. Preferably the scale is as follows:-

BRAG 5 to 1
TRIPS 4 to 1
RUN 1 to 1

Alternatively the pay out may be 7-5 for a run or higher ranking hand. The pay out is preferably based on the amount of the initial bet.

The first predetermined rank is preferably a pair. The pay out scale for bets according to (i) above is preferably as follows:-

BRAG 40 to 1
TRIPS 30 to 1
RUN 6 to 1
FLUSH 4 to 1
PAIR 1 to 1

Alternatively the pay out may be 14-5 for a pair

or higher ranking hand.

The second predetermined rank is preferably a high card hand containing a queen.

If desired an additional bet may be placed on the total numerical value of a player's hand. In this case picture cards preferably count ten points, aces one point and the other cards two to ten points, the total being compared to the dealer's total and the higher total winning. Tied hands may be won by the dealer or half stakes won by the dealer on tied hands.

If desired, a further or alternative additional payout may be made to a player based on one or more of the following:

- (a) a player's hand of a specified ranking could be an automatic winner, with a payout based either on the ANTE or the PLAY wager or both, regardless of the contest against the dealer i.e. even if the dealer has a higher hand than the player;
- (b) a player's hand of specified ranking could be an automatic non-loser, i.e. the player's stake is returned, based on either the ANTE or PLAYER wager or both regardless of the

contest against the dealer i.e. even if the dealer has a higher hand; and/or

- (c) a player's hand of specified ranking could win the PLAY wager if the dealer's hand is of a specified ranking below the dealer's minimum specified ranking (i.e. in the embodiment described above the specified ranking is queen high or better, so that the additional specified ranking could be jack high or lower).

The method may further comprise the step of the or each player, if required, placing a bet on a fixed or variable jackpot.

Each player may receive a joker card which may represent any card and which the player may place with each card hand. Alternatively, a similar joker card may be used in a manner whereby each player may discard a card from his hand and substitute his joker card to make a higher ranking hand. In either case the dealer is preferably also provided with a joker card to be used in the same way. The payout scales and predetermined ranks may be chosen or modified to reflect an increased probability of a high-ranking hand being produced.

Such joker cards serve to add excitement and

create higher hand values. Joker cards could also be designed to be retained permanently by players and if decorated approximately by an issuing casino or the like would serve the dual purpose of a playing card and a promotional item.

Joker cards may be used in this way in conjunction with other forms of card game. Thus the invention also provides a method of playing a card game involving one or more persons acting as a dealer and a banker, and at least one player, the method comprising the steps of:

- a) each player receiving a joker card which the player retains throughout the game for use with each hand of cards dealt to him;
- b) the dealer dealing to each player successive hands of cards as the game progresses, each hand of cards being played in accordance with the rules before the next hand is dealt;
- c) the player using the joker card in conjunction with each hand to improve the rank of the hand in accordance with predetermined hand rankings.

The invention also provides game apparatus for use in playing the above or other card games.

Thus according to another aspect of the invention

there is provided an apparatus for playing a card-type game comprising:

means for informing at least one player of a hierarchy of a plurality of possible hands and a predetermined plurality of winning card combinations;

means for receiving at least one wager selection from a plurality of wagering options by said at least one player, wherein said wagering options at least comprise:

- (a) whether player's hand attains at least one of said predetermined plurality of winning combinations; and
- (b) whether said player's hand has a higher ranking than a hand of said dealer; and

means for displaying a plurality of indicia of playing cards to form at least one player's hand and a dealer's hand.

According to a further aspect of the invention there is provided apparatus for use in playing a card game in which all possible hands of cards are ranked according to predetermined rules, the apparatus comprising a dealer's playing area and a plurality of player's playing areas, each player's playing area comprising a first zone in which a player may place a bet that the player's hand will be greater than a first

predetermined rank,, and a second zone in which a player may place a bet that the player's hand will beat the dealer's hand.

Preferably each of said player's playing areas also includes a third zone adapted to receive cards which remain in play after the player has inspected his hand and decided to continue playing the game.

In addition each player's play area preferably includes a further zone into which the player may place a play bet after having inspected his cards and decided to continue playing the game. The further zone may be superimposed upon the third, card-receiving zone.

The apparatus may also incorporate a chip tray to receive playing chips, the chip tray being placed in a position adjacent or convenient to the dealer. The apparatus may also incorporate an area or receptacle for cards not in play.

The apparatus may comprise a rigid playing surface of board, plastic or other suitable material or may comprise a cloth or other flexible material defining a playing surface.

In a preferred form, the surface is of generally

semi-circular form,, the dealer's playing area being located adjacent the straight edge of the playing surface or centrally thereof and the players' playing areas being disposed side-by-side in arcuate array adjacent the curved edge of the playing surface.

According to a still further aspect of the invention there is provided game apparatus comprising a plurality of playing cards of known construction and a combined playing and promotional card, one face of which comprises a playing face compatibly usable with the other cards and the opposite face of which comprises advertising or publicity material, the combined playing and promotional card being of more durable construction than the other cards.

Preferably said opposite or back face of the combined playing and promotional card is readily distinguishable from the back faces of the other cards.

The playing surface of the combined playing and promotional card may advantageously represent a joker or wild card usable to represent and/or substituted for a card of any rank incorporated in the remaining cards.

Advantageously the combined playing and promotional card is formed from flexible plastics

material and is of substantially the same area as the other cards but of increased thickness. The card may, for example, be of approximately twice the thickness of the other cards.

This form of game apparatus may be used in playing the card game referred to previously or other card games.

Embodiments of the invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

Fig. 1 shows a playing surface for use in playing a card game according to the invention;

Fig. 2 is a side view of a pay out sign;

Fig. 3 is a front view of the sign shown in Fig. 2;

Figs. 4 and 5 are views of opposite faces of a combined playing and promotional card; and

Fig. 6 is an end view of the card shown in Figs. 4 and 5.

Detailed Description of the Invention

Fig. 1 of the drawings shows a playing surface or table layout 10 on which the game of the invention may be played in a casino. The layout 10 may be marked or placed on any suitable surface, for example it may be provided on a gaming table or it may be in the form of a layout cloth supported on a suitable supporting surface. The layout provides a playing area 12 for each of up to seven players, and a separate area 14 for a banker who also acts as dealer. Each area 12 has a number of marked sections or zones 16, 18, 20 for the placing of various bets by the player as will be described hereinafter.

Each player takes a place at one of the areas 12. The game is played in a number of rounds as will be described. In each round, each player has the option of playing against the dealer, or betting on the rank of his hand, or playing a combination of these two options. The game is played with a standard 52-card deck and is conducted by the dealer, who in this example serves as the banker for the casino.

At the commencement of the game each player decides whether he wishes to play the particular round by betting against the dealer or by betting on the value

of his hand or both. To play against the dealer the player must make an ante bet by placing an appropriate wager, such as a token or chip, on the section 18 of his playing area 12. The gaming chips may be of any conventional kind and available in a number of denominations such as are well known within the art. If the player wishes (alternatively or in addition) to make a bet based on the value of his hand, he places an appropriate token or chip on the section 16 of his playing area 12. In the present example, the section 16 is marked "pair plus", and rules of the game provide that pay outs will be made according to a displayed scale on the value of the hand provided that it is a pair or better. In the three card version of the game, hands are ranked according to the following scale:-

Highest: BRAG: Three of one suit in sequence

AKQ highest ranking brag

KQJ next highest ranking brag

QJ10 next highest ranking brag, and so
on, until

32A lowest ranking brag

TRIPS: Three of One Rank

AAA highest ranking trips

KKK next highest ranking trips, and so
on, until

222 lowest ranking trips

RUN: Three of mixed suits in sequence

AKQ highest ranking

KQJ next highest ranking, and so on,
until

32A lowest ranking

FLUSH: Three of One Suit

AKJ highest ranking

AK10 next highest, and so on, until

A42 then to

532 lowest ranking

PAIR: Two of Same Rank

AAK highest ranking

AAQ next highest ranking, and so on,
until

223 lowest ranking

Lowest: HIGH CARD (a hand comprising none of the above)

AKJ highest ranking

AK10 next highest ranking, and so on, until

532 lowest ranking

Ace is high, but can be low in 3-2-A Sequence.

The scale of pay outs may be determined in accordance with rules of the game and/or by the casino. A preferred scale is as follows:-

BRAG 40 to 1
TRIPS 30 to 1
RUN 6 to 1
FLUSH 4 to 1
PAIR 1 to 1

Alternatively, in a casino or gaming jurisdiction where high odds pay outs are not favoured, a bet can be made that the value of the hand will be a pair or greater, and the pay out may be 14-5.

The pay out scales can be displayed in any convenient manner or location. Figs. 2 and 3 show a pay out sign comprising an inclined display area 25 and a horizontal base 26. In an alternative arrangement details of pay outs and bonus pay outs in accordance with rules of the game and/or of the casino may be marked on each player's playing area 12.

The two betting options are independent, so that a player may bet unequal amounts on the ante and pair plus options.

When the above bets are in place, the dealer shuffles the cards (manually or otherwise) and deals a three card hand to each player and to himself. Optionally, a preliminary step may be employed to determine to which of the playing areas 12, and thus to which player, the dealer deals the first card. Optionally also a number of cards may be discarded before dealing commences.

The cards may initially be dealt unseen or seen, depending upon casino policy. After dealing the remainder of the deck is placed in a discard rack (not shown).

When the cards have been dealt, any player who has placed an ante bet inspects his hand and determines whether he wishes either to forfeit his ante bet and not to play the hand, or to continue. If he wishes to continue he must place a play bet, which must be of proportionate value to and is preferably the same as the ante bet. The play bet is made by placing an appropriate chip on the section 20 marked "play" on his playing area 12. When he has made the bet he places his cards in the play area below the play bet section 20.

If a player forfeits his ante bet this is taken by the banker and the player's cards are discarded before

the game proceeds. ,

"Pair plus" bets are not affected to this point. However a player playing "pair plus" only, places his cards in the playing area. If the player is also playing against the dealer with an ante bet, he must make a play bet if he has a winning pair plus bet.

The dealer reveals his cards and arranges the cards to show the value of his hand. The dealer then in turn reveals each other player's hand (if not already visible) and makes settlement to each player as follows.

All players with ante and play bets are automatic winners if the dealer does not have a queen high hand or better. This rank may be varied in accordance with rules of the game or of the casino. Players are paid even money on their ante bet and their play bet is returned.

If the dealer has a queen high hand or better, each player's hand is compared with that of the dealer. If the player's hand is higher, the player is paid even money on both ante and play bets. If the player's hand is lower, the player forfeits his ante and play bets. If the dealer and player have the same hand the player may either withdraw his bet or leave or amend it for the

next round.

Preferably a further additional pay out is made by the banker to any player who is in play against the dealer, i.e. who has made ante and play bets, and who has a hand of a high rank. The ranks to which such further or bonus payments are made may be predetermined by rules of the game and/or the casino. One preferred schedule is as follows:-

BRAG 5 to 1

TRIPS 4 to 1

RUN 1 to 1

Alternatively, the pay out may be 7-5 for a run or higher ranking hand. The pay out is based on the ante bet.

Players who have wagered on the value of the hand (i.e. pair plus bets) win if the hand is at least a pair, and are paid by the banker according to the posted scale. These pay outs are independent of the results of the game against the dealer.

This procedure completes a single round of the game. Play then continues in another round, with players commencing by making ante and/or pair plus bets.

Figs. 4 to 6 show a combined playing and promotional card which may be used separately or in conjunction with one of the other embodiments of the invention. The card shown in Figs. 4 to 6 is of the same shape and size as conventional playing cards used in the game but is of more durable construction. Preferably the card is produced from flexible plastics material and is substantially thicker than the normal playing cards. The card may, for example, be approximately twice the thickness of the normal cards.

The card is used as a joker or wild card. The front face of the card is shown in Fig. 4 and incorporates a logo or illustration appropriate to a joker card together with other matter such as the name of the game, a proprietary rights statement and/or other details. The rear face of the card is of a different appearance from the rear faces of the normal playing cards and preferably incorporates the name and possibly logo of the casino or the like together with other promotional information.

The card of Figs. 4 to 6 has a dual function; in playing the game it is used as a joker or wild card; subsequently the card can be taken away by the player and retained as a memento and also serves as a promotional item. In a three-card version of the game

described above, a player may receive two standard playing cards and a joker card to form a three-card hand. Alternatively, a player may be provided with three standard cards and be permitted to substitute the joker for one of these cards to make an improved three-card hand. In four and five card versions of the game a joker card of the kind shown in Figs. 4 to 6 may be issued to each player and to the dealer. The players and dealer then use the joker card in conjunction with each four card hand dealt to them to make a five card poker hand. In a five card game each player and the dealer may substitute the joker card for any card in their hand to improve the five card hand they hold. This has the result of creating higher hand values and adding excitement to the game.

The card of Figs. 4 to 6 is thus a novel article for use in playing the card game according to the invention or other card games and serves the dual function of being usable and distinguishable from the other cards in play, and serving as a memento and promotional item to be retained by the player.

Various modifications may be made within the scope of the invention. For example, the naming of the bets, the naming and/or ranking of any hand, the pay out scales and predetermined winning or losing ranks may be

varied in accordance with the requirements of the casino. It will be appreciated that other names to those used herein may be applied to the hands mentioned. For example, brag may also be known as a straight flush or bouncer, trips may be known as three of a kind or prile, and a run may also be known as a straight. The table lay out may be varied from that described and shown. The rules may be varied, or additional rules imposed, within the scope of the invention. In particular, there may be introduced a further option of a player betting on a high odds pay out bet or on a fixed or variable jackpot which is paid out in accordance with rules of the casino on a premium hand, or when a high ranked hand is beaten by the dealer. Examples of odds available could be 5000/1 or more against a royal brag - ace, king, queen suited or up to 250,000/1 or more against a brag being beaten by a higher brag. Alternatively the player's hand may be combined with the dealer's hand to form a six card hand offering odds of up to 4,000,000 to 1 or more against Ace to Nine of the same suit. Two or more of these bets could be combined with suitably reduced odds and if desired consolation pay outs could be made to players having hands less than the premium hand and/or to other players who have taken part in the jackpot.

An alternative or additional further payout may be

made to a player based on one or more of the following:-

- (a) a player's hand of a specified ranking could be an automatic winner, with a payout based either on the ANTE or the PLAY wager or both, regardless of the contest against the dealer i.e. even if the dealer has a higher hand than the player;
- (b) a player's hand of specified ranking could be an automatic non-loser, i.e. the player's stake is returned, based on either the ANTE or PLAYER wager or both regardless of the contest against the dealer i.e. even if the dealer has a higher hand; and/or
- (c) a player's hand of specified ranking could win the PLAY wager if the dealer's hand is of a specified ranking below the dealer's minimum specified ranking (i.e. in the embodiment described above the specified ranking is queen high or better, so that the additional specified ranking could be jack high or lower).

Where the game incorporates a jackpot or a numerical hand value bet, separate betting areas would be required for these bets. These may be incorporated at any convenient position on the players' playing

areas. The display stand and the joker and promotional card may also be modified or omitted as desired.

Whilst the game is described particularly for play in a Casino using actual playing cards, it is not limited in this respect. The game may be played for example in a domestic environment, and may be played in the format of a slot machine, scratch card or similar.

The game may further be presented in a format where the indicia or images of playing cards are displayed mechanically, electronically or otherwise. For example, the game could be provided in the format of a video game, or as a multi-unit video format wherein a screen is provided for one or more player and for a game against a dealer.

Whilst endeavouring in the foregoing Specification to draw attention to those features of the invention believed to be of particular importance it should be understood that the Applicant claims protection in respect of any patentable feature or combination of features hereinbefore referred to and/or shown in the drawings whether or not particular emphasis has been placed thereon.

Claims:-

1. A method of playing a card game involving one or more persons acting as a dealer and a banker, and at least one player, the method comprising the steps of:-
 - (a) the or each player placing a bet
 - (i) that the player's hand will be greater than a first predetermined rank, where all possible hands are ranked according to predetermined rules; or
 - (ii) that the player's hand will beat the dealer; or
 - (iii) a combination of the above;
 - (b) the dealer dealing to each player (including himself) a hand of cards;
 - (c) the or each player who placed a bet according to (ii) above inspecting his or her hand and deciding either to forfeit the original bet to the banker or to place a further bet;
 - (d) the dealer revealing his hand and determining whether it exceeds a second predetermined rank; and
if the dealer's hand does not exceed the second predetermined rank, the banker paying each player an amount based on the bet according to (ii) above and returning the further bet to the

player, or

if the dealer's hand exceeds the second predetermined rank, comparing the dealer's hand in turn with that of each other player who placed a bet according to (ii) above and if the player's hand is higher, the banker paying the player an amount based on both initial and further bets, and if the player's hand is lower, the player forfeiting both bets to the banker;

- (e) the banker paying in accordance with a predetermined scale any player who placed a bet according to (i) above and whose hand exceeds the first predetermined rank.

2. A method of playing a card game involving a dealer and at least one player comprising the steps of:

establishing a hierarchy of a plurality of possible hands;

establishing a predetermined plurality of winning card combinations;

providing at least one player with a plurality of betting options, wherein said betting options at least comprise:

- (a) whether said player's hand attains at least one of said predetermined plurality of winning combinations; and

(b) whether said player's hand has a higher ranking than a hand of said dealer.

displaying a plurality of indicia of playing cards to form at least one player's hand and a dealer's hand; and

resolving bets of said at least one player.

3. A method according to Claim 1 or Claim 2 in which each hand comprises three cards.

4. A method according to Claim 3 in which the hands are ranked according to the following scale, where A = ace, K = king, Q = queen, J = jack and numbers 10 to 2 designate the other cards:

Highest: BRAG: Three of one suit in sequence

AKQ highest ranking brag

KQJ next highest ranking brag

QJ10 next highest ranking brag, and so
on, until

32A lowest ranking brag

TRIPS: Three of One Rank

AAA highest ranking trips

KKK next highest ranking trips, and so
on, until

222 -lowest ranking trips

RUN: Three of mixed suits in sequence

AKQ highest ranking

KQJ next highest ranking, and so on,
until

32A lowest ranking

FLUSH: Three of One Suit

AKJ highest ranking

AK10 next highest, and so on, until

532 lowest ranking

PAIR: Two of Same Rank

AAK highest ranking

AAQ next highest ranking, and so on,
until

223 lowest ranking

Lowest: HIGH CARD (a hand comprising none of the above)

AKJ highest ranking

AK10 next highest ranking, and so on, until

532 lowest ranking

5. A method according to any of the preceding claims
in which an additional pay out is made by the banker to
any player who has made an initial bet according to (ii)

above and a further bet, and whose hand is any of a number of specified high ranking hands.

6. A method according to Claim 5 in which the additional pay out is based on the amount of the initial bet.

7. A method according to Claim 5 or Claim 6 in which the pay out is made in accordance with the following scale:

BRAG 5 to 1
TRIPS 4 to 1
RUN 1 to 1

8. A method according to any of the preceding claims in which a pay out on bets according to (i) is made according to the following scale:

BRAG 40 to 1
TRIPS 30 to 1
RUN 6 to 1
FLUSH 4 to 1
PAIR 1 to 1

9. A method according to any of the preceding claims in which the first predetermined rank is a pair.

10. A method according to any of the preceding claims in which the second predetermined rank is a high card hand containing a queen.

11. A method according to any of the preceding claims in which the player who is dealt to first is varied.

12. A method according to any of the preceding claims wherein each player receives a joker card which the player retains and may use in conjunction with each hand dealt to him.

13. A method according to Claim 12 wherein said hand comprises four cards and the player may place his joker card with each four card hand to make a five card poker hand.

14. A method according to Claim 12 wherein said hand comprises five cards and the player may discard one card and substitute his joker card to make a five card poker hand.

15. A method according to Claim 12 wherein said hand comprises three cards and the player may discard one card, and substitute his joker card to make a three-card hand.

16. A method according to Claim 12 wherein said hand comprises two cards and the player may place his joker card with each hand to make a three-card hand.

17. A method according to any of Claims 12 to 16 wherein the dealer receives a joker card which the dealer retains and may use in conjunction with each hand dealt to him in the same manner as each of the players.

18. A method of playing a card game involving one or more persons acting as a dealer and a banker, and at least one player, the method comprising the steps of:

- a) each player receiving a joker card which the player retains throughout the game for use with each hand of cards dealt to him;
- b) the dealer dealing to each player successive hands of cards as the game progresses, each hand of cards being played in accordance with the rules before the next hand is dealt;
- c) the player using the joker card in conjunction with each hand to improve the rank of the hand in accordance with predetermined hand rankings.

19. A method according to Claim 18 wherein each hand comprises four cards and the player places his joker card with each four card hand to make a five card poker

hand.

20. A method according to Claim 18 wherein each hand comprises five cards and the player discards one card and substitutes his joker card to make a five card poker hand.

21. A method according to Claim 18 wherein each hand comprises three cards and the player discards one card and substitutes his joker card to make a three-card hand.

22. A method according to Claim 18 wherein each hand comprises two cards and the player places his joker card with each two card hand to make a three-card hand.

23. A method according to Claim 18 wherein the dealer receives a joker card at the commencement of the game which the dealer uses in conjunction with each successive hand of cards dealt to the dealer to improve the rank of the hand in accordance with predetermined hand rankings.

24. A method according to Claim 18 wherein the hand rankings are standard poker hand rankings.

25. A method according to any of the preceding claims

wherein an additional payout is made by the banker based on one or more of the following:

(a) a player's hand of a specified ranking could be an automatic winner with a payout based either on the ANTE or the PLAY wager or both, regardless of the contest against the dealer i.e. even if the dealer has a higher hand than the player:

(b) a player's hand of specified ranking could be an automatic non-loser, i.e. the player's stake is returned, based on either the ANTE or PLAYER wager or both regardless of the contest against the dealer i.e. even if the dealer has a higher hand; and/or

(c) a player's hand of specified ranking could win the PLAY wager if the dealer's hand is of a specified ranking below the dealer's minimum specified ranking (i.e. in the embodiment described above the specified ranking is queen high or better, so that the additional specified ranking could be jack high or lower).

26. Apparatus for playing a card-type game comprising:

means for informing at least one player of a hierarchy of a plurality of possible hands and a predetermined plurality of winning card combinations;

means for receiving at least one wager selection from a plurality of wagering options by said at least one player, wherein said wagering options at least comprise:

(a) whether player's hand attains at least one of said predetermined plurality of winning combinations; and

(b) whether said player's hand has a higher ranking than a hand of said dealer; and

means for displaying a plurality of indicia of playing cards to form at least one player's hand and a dealer's hand.

27. Apparatus for use in playing a game comprising a pack of cards and a playing surface, all possible hands of cards being ranked according to predetermined rules, and the playing surface defining a dealer's playing area and a plurality of player's playing areas, each player's playing area comprising a first zone in which a player may place a bet that the player's hand will be greater than a first predetermined rank, and a second zone in which a player may place a bet that the player's hand will beat the dealer's hand.

28. Apparatus according to Claim 27, wherein each of said player's playing areas also includes a third zone adapted to receive cards which remain in play after the

player has inspected his hand and decided to continue playing the game.

29. Apparatus according to Claim 28 including a further zone into which the player may place a play bet after having inspected his cards and decided to continue playing the game.

30. Apparatus according to Claim 29 wherein said further zone is superimposed upon said third, card-receiving zone.

31. Apparatus according to any of Claims 27 to 30 incorporating an area for cards not in play.

32. Apparatus according to Claim 31 wherein said area comprises a receptacle.

33. Apparatus according to any of Claims 27 to 32 wherein said playing surface is rigid.

34. Apparatus according to any of Claims 27 to 32 wherein said playing surface comprises a cloth adapted to be supported on a supporting surface.

35. Apparatus according to any of Claims 27 to 34 wherein said playing surface is of generally

semi-circular form, the dealer's playing area being located adjacent the straight edge of the playing surface.

36. Apparatus according to any of Claims 27 to 35 wherein said playing surface is of generally semi-circular form, the dealer's playing area being located generally centrally of the playing surface.

37. Apparatus according to any of Claims 27 to 36 wherein said playing surface is of generally semi-circular form, the players' playing areas being disposed side-by-side in arcuate array adjacent the curved edges of the playing surface.

38. Apparatus according to any of Claims 27 to 37 including means for use in placing bets in said first, second or further zones.

39. Apparatus according to Claim 38 wherein said means for placing bets comprise betting chips or tokens.

40. Apparatus according to Claim 39 incorporating a tray to receive said betting chips or tokens.

41. Game apparatus comprising a plurality of playing cards of known construction and a combined playing and

promotional card, one face of which comprises a playing face compatibly usable with the other cards and the opposite face of which comprises advertising or publicity material, the combined playing and promotional card being of more durable construction than the other cards.

42. Apparatus according to Claim 41 wherein said opposite or back face of the combined playing and promotional card is readily distinguishable from the back faces of the other cards.

43. Apparatus according to Claim 41 or Claim 42 wherein the playing surface of the combined playing and promotional card represents a joker or wild card.

44. Apparatus according to any of Claims 41 to 43 wherein the combined playing and promotional card is formed from flexible plastics material.

45. Apparatus according to any of Claims 41 to 44 wherein the combined playing and promotional card is of substantially the same area as the other cards but of increased thickness.

46. Apparatus according to any of Claims 4 to 45 wherein the card is approximately twice the thickness of

the other cards.

47. A method substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

48. Apparatus substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.



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Databases searched:

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:

UK Cl (Ed.N): A6H (HMX)

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Other:

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Identity of document and relevant passage	Relevant to claims
X	US5366228 Kangsanaraks	26-40
X	US5294128 Marquez	26-40
X	US5275415 Wisted	26-40
X	US5257810 Schorr	26-40
X	US4836553 Suttle	26-40

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